Google bringing call intelligence and automation to SMBs, for $39 per month

Google is bringing enterprise-like automated customer service and call intelligence capabilities to small businesses (SMBs) for a flat fee of $39 per month. Today, Google's Area 120 experimental products group announced the introduction of a new virtual agent and telephony product called CallJoy.

CallJoy promises to help small businesses offer better customer service, free up employees from having to answer the phone and convert more business by ensuring that all calls are answered.

Automated agent. CallJoy starts with a Google Voice-style local phone number (which raises the question of NAP consistency and may be a major problem with the product). Behind the number is a system, powered by the same technologies behind Google Assistant and Duplex, that will filter calls, block spam and manage customer calls. In some ways, this is "Duplex, for business owners."

"When the phone rings, the automated CallJoy agent answers, greets callers with a custom message and provides basic business information (like hours of operation)," according to the blog post. If the caller wants to schedule an appointment or place an order, "CallJoy's virtual agent will send the customer an SMS text message containing a URL" that will allow for the completion of the desired task (e.g., placing a take out order online).

Calls are transcribed, data in dashboard. All calls are recorded and transcribed. CallJoy envisions that SMB owners will search, tag and interact with transcripts to gain insights about customer patterns, needs or concerns. However,

the system also houses data in a dashboard and pushes it to SMBs in a daily email. While I haven't seen this in action, the potential insights are similar to what enterprise call tracking companies are doing for major brands and retailers.

Why we care. This weekend Google surveyed small business owners about their interest in monthly subscription bundles of enhanced services through GMB. CallJoy could easily have been among them.

If CallJoy works as advertised it could be a very valuable service to understaffed small businesses. It could also result in more conversions and revenue for SMBs. As Google points out in its post, "nearly half of small business calls go unanswered because owners are just too busy or assume the caller is another spammer."

As suggested by the GMB survey, it's probably also a preview of new, non-advertising services for SMBs that Google will monetize on a subscription basis.

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About The Author

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